



Exposure to Social Media Advertisements and Youth's Response

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Vol. V, No. III (Summer2020)

Pages: 144 – 150

p-ISSN: 2616-955X

e-ISSN: 2663-7030

ISSN-L: 2616-955X



Abstract

The major purpose of this study is to examine the effects of social media advertising on the purchase behaviour of young university students. The study employed an exploratory research design and cross-sectional survey technique. On the basis of a comprehensive literature review, research hypotheses were formulated to investigate the relationship between study variables. The primary data were collected using questionnaires from students of public sector universities operating in the city of Faisalabad, Pakistan. Non-probability and convenience sampling were adopted in the selection of target respondents, which were 283 students, both day-scholars and boarding students. The findings reveal that social media advertising affects the purchasing behaviour of social media users. The recommendations of the study are that the companies should concentrate more on promotional activities using social networks as this is more effective, less costly and accessible to a large number of target audiences.

Key Words: Social Media Marketing, Consumer Buying Behaviour, Social Media Advertisement, Buying Decision Process, Youth Response

Introduction

Marketing through social media is trying to make a mark on consumer preferences, and this is important to know that how social media is being used by organizations for the marketing of their brands in Pakistan and which social networks are more popular for the purpose among consumers and how. Most of the existing studies in social media marketing have been conducted from the organizations' perspective that how organizations make strategies, update web pages and get feedback from the consumer for improving their product quality & better services. This study is different and exploratory in a manner that it will look at the scenario from the consumer's side. The media theory which can perfectly support and frame this study is Uses & gratification theory; it will help to explore the gratification factors behind a consumer for choosing social media content or social websites.

This theory describes the usage of social media on the basis of factors like Socialization, Entertainment, Self-status seeking, Information or Interactivity, demassification and asynchronies. The present research determines to find out the impacts of social media marketing on the purchasing behaviour of the consumers, particularly university students, male and female, hostilities and day scholars. It is beyond doubt that the internet has revolutionized the living patterns of people, and it has achieved universal acceptance in bringing comfort in almost every mode of life (Williams, 2009). Consumers are habitual to discover new means of communication progressively that has been fulfilled by the internet in every era. The usage of the internet has been advanced through all the developments of technology and equipment, seeking information is an old trend now, the consumers want more, and they feel privileged for giving feedback & opinion to the web pages, they share their info and experiences with other consumers. It has comforted the usage as well so that the people belonging to

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any age group can easily adopt the new trends and equipment. They play an active role in the selection of a particular web page. Moreover, this is very important to measure the involvement of the consumer in the selection of the medium and particular content.

Background of the Study

Most of the existing studies in social media marketing have been conducted from the organizations' perspective that how organizations make strategies, update web pages and get feedback from the consumer for improving their product quality & better services. This study is different and exploratory in a manner that it will look at the scenario from the consumer's side. The media theory which can perfectly support and frame this study is Uses & gratification theory; it will help to explore the gratification factors behind a consumer for choosing social media content or social websites. This theory describes the usage of social media on the basis of factors like Socialization, Entertainment, Self-status seeking, Information or Interactivity, demassification and asynchronies. The present research determines to find out the impacts of social media marketing on the purchasing behaviour of the consumers, particularly university students, male and female, hostilities and day scholars. It is beyond doubt that the internet has revolutionized the living patterns of people, and it has achieved universal acceptance in bringing comfort in almost every mode of life (Williams, 2009). Consumers are habitual to discover new means of communication progressively that has been fulfilled by the internet in every era. The usage of the internet has been advanced through all the developments of technology and equipment, seeking information is an old trend now, the consumers want more, and they feel privileged for giving feedback & opinion to the web pages, they share their info and experiences with other consumers. It has comforted the usage as well so that the people belonging to any age group can easily adopt the new trends and equipment. They play an active role in the selection of a particular web page. Moreover, this is very important to measure the involvement of the consumer in the selection of the medium and particular content.

Significance of the Study

This study is a signified addition to the field of social media marketing in Pakistan on the consumer's front. It has found out major gratifications of the consumers for using marketing content on the social sites, why they go for the marketing content on social media and how they find it worth taking in their lives. The current study is signified in this manner as it has explored differences in the usage patterns of male and female on the other hand it explored all those factors which differentiate the purchasing behaviour of light users and heavy users among university students. This study will help marketers to consider all the points that attract consumers towards ads on social media.

Study Objectives

The primary aim of this research is to gauge the impact of marketing content on social media on the purchasing behaviour of university students, and the objectives of this research can be summarized as follows.

- To identify constituents of social media through literature review
- To investigate popular social media among university student
- To track social media marketing gratifications of university students
- To categorize the type of marketing content consulted by university students on social media
- To investigate the impact of marketing content of social media on the purchasing behaviour of university students
- To conceptualize the impact of social media marketing in the social interactions of university students
- To explore popular marketing campaigns/content on social media
- To identify how marketing practitioners have incorporated social media as a part of their marketing strategy

Research Questions

1. Do university students actively participate in the selection of social networks to gratify their needs?
2. Do they respond to the network sites by Subscribing, participating in the discussion and Signing up, writing feedback in the suggestion box or joining Facebook pages?
3. Which are the uses & gratification of social media on marketing on which male and female can be differentiated?
4. Does marketing content on Social Media influence the purchasing behavior of University students?
5. Does online purchasing influence by the consumer's usage time of social media?
6. Have boarding students and day-scholar's different patterns for exploring information on social media and online purchasing?

Literature Review

Social media is defined by [Kaplan and Haenlein \(2010\)](#) as “the group of internet-based applications founded on a technological framework of Web 2.0, which enables creation and sharing of user-generated content”. Social media is an internet-driven technology enabling social interaction among users by deploying media tools websites, also called social networking sites ([Hussain, 2012](#)). The evolution of social media can be traced back to weblogs (shortly termed as blogs) which have been in vogue for nearly a decade. Individuals tend to manage and own blog-based websites and registered their comments or perspectives about different arenas of diary-like, maintaining a diary to record personal views.

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The shift of power from firm to consumers can be quoted from various examples. The campaign 'United Breaks Guitars' by Dave Carroll is a classic example in this regard ([Berthon et al, 2012](#)). Carroll used United Airlines on the way to Chicago and figured out that they have broken his guitar. He filed a lawsuit against the airline and pursued the damages claim for almost a year but was refused finally. He wrote a song and uploaded it to YouTube, and shared the story on Twitter as well. Instantly traditional media also took notice and shared the story on CNN and other major channels. The market capitalization of United Airlines suffered a loss of 180 million USD ([Ayres, 2009](#)).

The social networking sites possess video and audio characteristics and composed of web-blogs, social bookmarking, RSS Feeds, wikis, media sharing spaces & micro-blogging sites, which promote asynchronous and synchronous communication and interactions ([Armstrong & Franklin, 2008](#)). Social media is the combination of media channel and content which is created by the social interaction of individuals and among organizations and individuals; however, the primary source of information is a consumer rather than an organization ([Kietzman et al., 2011](#)). The traditional media one-way communication from organizations to mass consumers such as Billboards, radio and TV etc. Social media encourages two way and multi-way communication by enabling bilateral dialogue among users. Consumers have access to a sea of the audience by using text, pictures, video and multimedia.

Most of the consumers buy retail products from local small shops (Karyana Stores) without any consideration of the quality and brands (unorganized buying), so the shop keepers provide them almost low-quality products on high margins of profits, and this practice is still in process from last many decades. But now the customer has become well aware of his needs, price and the quality of products which he buys and uses on a regular basis. From the last 5 to ten years, retail buying is being shifted to Retail stores from (Karyana Stores) because the consumer thinks that he can get better quality and branded products for the retail stores. So, the customer traffic on retail

stores is growing smoothly, and the retail stores target customers with the sole motive of increasing customers in-store (Yip et al., 2012). With increasing in customers and the display of products on racks with attractive conditions and decoration, the prospective customer goes for the purchase of the product positively.

The store manager uses many strategies to attract customers of different segments. For example, the strategies to target customers of (Youth, 17-25 Years and age group of 30-40 Years) include different sales promotions and discounts on cosmetics. For targeting the service class segment, they mostly offer by leveraging and heavy discounts on different services products, and for office segments or privately-owned business, by discounts or offers on office supplies like stationery. Whatever customer segment they target, they are directly or indirectly targeting demographic aspects of the target customers. So, we can say that retail store buying is an organized retail activity, and the old practice (Karyana Store) buying is unorganized practice. As per the international council for research on international economic relations, organized and modern retail is usually from chain stores, all owned or franchised by a central entity, or a single store that is larger than some cut-off point (Waterschoot et al., 2008).

Research Methodology

The survey method was adopted for the collection of primary data, while the questionnaire used as a data-gathering tool. The population for the research includes both male and female students who are users of social media and have a minimum of 14 years of education. Along with the convenience sampling technique, the sample size selected for the study is 300 students studying in public sector universities of Faisalabad, Pakistan. This sampling technique (Convenience sampling) is from the category of non-probability sampling used for the study.

Respondent's Profile

General information about the respondents of the research with regards to their age, gender, marital status, education, and residential status is shown in table 3. Of the majority of the respondents, almost 55% were males, while 45% were female. With respect to education level, 57% of the respondents were post-graduated, and 32% having a graduation/ BS degree. Taking students' age into consideration, it was observed that the age of 68% was ranged between 21 to 30 years, about 24% were aged less than 20 years, and age of 8% was above 30 years. In the case of marital status, 95% of the sample students were unmarried, and while considering the residential status of the respondents, it is observed that 72 % live in their houses while 28% were living in hostels.

Table 1. Summary of General Information about Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	156	55
Female	127	45
Marital Status		
Married	14	5
Single/Unmarried	269	95
Residential Status		
Boarding student	79	28
Day scholar	204	72
Level of Education		
BS	91	32
Masters	162	57
M.Phil/PhD	30	11
Age		
Less than 20 Years	69	24
20 to 23 Years	31	11
24 to 27 Years	123	43
28 to 30 Years	39	14
Above 30 Years	21	8

Results And Discussion

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
Social Media Ads	1	4.60	3.02	0.84
Youth Response	1	5.00	3.66	0.94

N=283

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis of the study variables is presented in table 4.2. According to (Kline, 2005), the correlation among the variables should be less than 0.85 for divergent validity of constructs. These analyses show relationships among the variables, either positively or negatively. The correlation analysis results depict a significant positive relationship between the study variables. The correlation analysis also provides the basis for hypothesized directions for the relationship between the study variables. The results of correlation analysis revealed that all variables are significantly and positively correlated as all values are less than 0.85, and there is also no negative value.

Table 3. Correlations

Variables	Social Media Ads	Youth Response
Social Media Ads	1	1
Youth Response	0.759**	1

N= 283

“Independent variables have a positive linear relationship to the dependent variable at a significant level of 0.05. All value in this probability is less than 0.9, which indicates that there is no multicollinearity problem. The correlation among the variables is below the cut-off values of correlation defined by Kline (2005). The correlation analysis shows that the study variables are positively correlated”.

Discussion

The results reveal that advertisements on social media webs have a significant positive effect on consumer buying behaviour, especially young university student, because they have more tendency to use the internet and social media platforms. The finding of this study about the relationship between social media advertisement and buying behavior of young university students is well-supported by the studies of [Mir \(2012\)](#); [Smith, & Zook, \(2012\)](#); [Kumar et al., \(2016\)](#); [Pate, & Adams \(2013\)](#); [Ertemel, & Ammoura, \(2016\)](#); [Solomon et al., \(2014\)](#); [Rehman et al., \(2014\)](#); [Van-Tien et al., \(2014\)](#); [O'Keeffe, & Clarke-Pearson, \(2011\)](#); [Pelling, & White, \(2009\)](#); [Chan, Leung Ng, & Luk, \(2013\)](#); [Kamal, Chu, & Pedram \(2013\)](#); [Dix et al., \(2012\)](#); [Haferkamp, & Krämer, \(2011\)](#); [Boyland, & Whalen, \(2015\)](#); the [Chu, \(2011\)](#); [Marris, Thornham, & Bassett, \(Eds.\). \(2000\)](#), and [Duke et al. \(2014\)](#).

The study results demonstrate that the high frequency of social media ads and the high involvement of young people in exploring information about products and services are extremely important as it not only enhances the youth knowledge about the products but it also influences their purchasing decisions.

Conclusion

Clearly defined by literature review and interpretation of qualitative data that basic constituents of social media are the creators and the content. The creator could be anyone, and content could be anything as social media is a free form for everyone. Facebook is popular among university students, the youth for many reasons; they want connectivity (Social Interactions), stay updated all the time with new information, news of fashion trends, its accessible and easy to use as well.

The present research concluded that consumer goes to social media for marketing purpose as well, this is the part of their daily life now, they exposed to social media and click ads with some gratifications in their mind which different social media marketing from the other sources of marketing as well, consumers need information about a product, they want to put back their feedback on social sites about these products, they share their experiences with other consumers and get all the positive and negative feedback about the product before making the decision of purchasing. Sometimes the purpose is just amusement, not purchasing. Results concluded that most of the time, consumers are attracted towards the product through social media, and most of this content is visual images, got inspired through the feature of visual advertisement.

University students are very active to directly respond to the website for feedback, actively select an online advertisement to gratify their need for entertainment but avoid direct interaction with the shopkeepers to a very lesser extent. Active participation could be defined in any way; respondents actively participate in giving feedback or share their opinion on social websites; almost 148 (49%) respondents respond to social media by liking their pages, while 57 (19%) by joining the webpage. Furthermore, 14% sign up, and approximately 12% respond by writing in the recommendations box.

Findings proved that the major thing that the effects of social media depends upon the usage time as well. As much time consumers spend on social media as more he or they will be impacted accordingly. This current research concluded that heavy users are more to rely on social media for purchasing than light users; the correlations was .555 among using time and reliability over social media.

Hostilities and day scholars are almost equal for exploring information on social media, and they are almost equally influenced by social media marketing for purchasing, technological advancement and distribution of laptops by the Punjab government has minimized differences and provides equal opportunities to the university students. Researchers did not find overall huge differences among the usage and gratification of male and female for social media marketing; the reason is considered the same equal opportunities of having laptop and technology. However, small differences were observed among uses and gratification through cross-tabulation.

Factor analysis indicated that respondents get exposed to social media marketing to get information and answers to queries regarding product and services are more connected with the consumer of some product, and they share their opinion and experience about product moreover respondents are exposed to social media marketing because they find it sufficient for providing information as it contains more updated content, it's faster and saves of time as it has made purchasing easy for them. University students find advertisement more attractive, so they explore it on social websites and rely on social media for purchasing; it helps them to make a decision about purchasing something.

Social media has a strong impact on the purchasing behaviour of university students. They find it easy to explore social media for seeking information regarding any product or service. It Helps consumer to make a decision about purchasing sometimes; attractive content on social media drags consumers attention towards a product. Although online purchasing is not such a popular trend in Pakistan because the data from current research evidence that students do not prefer online purchasing so far but online content of marketing help consumers to make decisions about purchasing.

Recommendation

The current study contains a sample of university students: comparison between gender, hostilities and day scholars. Further study could be progressed by taken up cross-age group comparisons.

Marketing is a traditional construct, but marketing on social media is a new one; it may be useful to perform a longitudinal study tracking the relationship between social media and marketing effects on the lives of consumers in many ways.

Further studies may choose to use a more diverse sample with regard to social class, family structure and lifestyle. The researchers could take students, household people and job holders for the comparison of social media marketing; its uses and effects on the purchasing behaviour of the consumer.

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